

us wind up somehow doing the right thing. And we will do the right thing again.

I'd like to close with words written by the wonderful poet W.H. Auden over 50 years ago: "In the deserts of the heart, let the healing fountain start. In the prison of his days, teach the free man how to praise."

We praise America tonight, and we thank you for bringing it home to us in such a powerful way in these last days.

Good night, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:47 p.m. at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Ken Walsh, outgoing president, White House Correspondents' Association, and entertainer Conan O'Brien.

Remarks to the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in New York City

April 30, 1995

Foreign Minister Peres, thank you for your powerful words, the example of your life, and your tireless work for peace. Rabbi Lau, Governor Pataki, Senator Moynihan, Senator D'Amato, members of the New York congressional delegation, Speaker Silver, Ambassador Rabinovich and members of the Diplomatic Corps, Mr. Mayor, and of course, my friend Benjamin Meed. I thank you and your wife for joining us and helping Hillary and me and, through us, the entire United States last year to understand the deepest and profoundest meaning of the Warsaw Uprising.

This year we mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust. Since Biblical times, 50th anniversaries have had special meanings. Our English word "jubilee" comes to us from the Hebrew word for that anniversary. And the Scripture tells us that every 50th year is to be holy and the land should be left fallow and slaves freed upon the blowing of a shofar. It was a year in the Scriptures that closed an era and began another.

We think of such things here on the end of this century and the beginning of a new millennium, but in profound ways there can be no such closure for the half-century after the Holocaust. For all of those who lived through it and all of us who came after, the Holocaust redefined our understanding of the human capacity for evil. Anyone who has stood in that tower of photographs in the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, who has seen those unforgettable, warm, expressive faces from that small Lithuanian town, anyone who has seen

the horror even in pictures knows that we must now and never allow the memory of those events to fade.

The Bible also made the link between memory and deed, enjoining us so often to remember the years of slavery in Egypt and the acts of the wicked and then to act morally. Today we must remember those years of radical evil as though it were a commandment to do so because, as we have seen, hatred still flourishes where it has a chance. Intolerance still lurks, waiting to spread. Racist violence still threatens abroad and at home.

We are taught in our faith that as much as we might regret it, deep within the human spirit there is, and will always remain until the end of time, the capacity for evil. It must be remembered, and it must be opposed.

The commandment to remember is especially great now because, as the Foreign Minister said, this has been a very bloody century. And soon, the living memory of the Holocaust will pass. Those of us, then, who were born after the war will then have to shoulder the responsibility that the survivors have carried for so long: to fight all forms of racism, to combat those who distort the past and peddle hate in the present, to stand against the new forms of organized evil and counter their determination to use and to abuse the modern miracles of technology and openness and possibility that offer us the opportunity to build for our children the most remarkable world ever known but still carry, within these forces, the seeds of further destruction.

I have hope for the future because our Americans are embracing the responsibility of memory. In the 2 years since the Holocaust Memorial Museum opened, more than 4 million people—more, many more than were expected—have visited that remarkable place. The daily number of visitors is still increasing, and about 8 of every 10 Americans who visit are not Jews. Twenty thousand school groups have been there already, and with the help of the museum, some 40,000 teachers around our country now teach about the Holocaust in their classes. Perhaps those children one day will be the kind of adults who would stop and ask why and do more if someone ever came to take a friend or a neighbor away.

If so, we will have been true to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and we will have pressed the cause of decency and human dignity yet one more step forward. This is our task: making memory real and making memory a guide for our own actions.

I am reminded of the extraordinary visit I had last year to the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague, that great forest of stones. As you know, everyone who visits there, or any Jewish cemetery, puts a stone on a grave, adding to memory, never subtracting from it. For me, someone new

to the experience, it was an overwhelming symbol of how we all ought to think and live.

Over the centuries, memory has been built there in Prague in a very deep and profound way, in the city that Hitler wanted to turn into a museum for what he hoped would be an extinct people. We, too, now must add to those stones, stones of remembrance, like this day-long gathering, stones that add to the memory of the victims and to our knowledge of the barbarism that claimed them.

Ultimately, I wanted to be here today, after all our country has been through in these last days, because you have taught me that the vigilance of memory is our greatest defense, and I thank you all for that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at Madison Square Garden. In his remarks, he referred to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel; Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazic Jews of Israel; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York; Sheldon Silver, New York State House speaker; Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City; and Benjamin Meed, president, American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, and his wife, Vladka.

Remarks at the World Jewish Congress Dinner in New York City *April 30, 1995*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Edgar. Foreign Minister Peres, thank you for being here, for your visionary leadership, your wise words. To all of the friends of Edgar Bronfman who are here from Canada and from around the world, I am profoundly honored to be with you this evening and to receive this wonderful Nahum Goldmann Award.

I know he was the president of the World Jewish Congress, the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. Every group I can think of associated with Edgar Bronfman, except the Seagram's Group—[*laughter*]*—*we would all like to be president of that, thanks to the work he has done. I would remind you, Edgar, that I'm a relatively young man without a great deal of job security. I hope

you will keep me in mind in the future. [*Laughter*]

We gather—I wish you wouldn't laugh quite so much at that. [*Laughter*] We gather tonight to celebrate the accomplishments of an extraordinary man. For all of you, your presence here is testimony to your shared values, your shared goals, and to the countless lives that Edgar Bronfman has touched. In these years of great change and opportunity and of great anxiety and even fear, in years of too much cynicism, the Jewish community has found in Edgar Bronfman the rarest of combination, a leader armed with passion for his people's cause and endowed with the strength to act on that passion. As president of the World Jewish Congress and a citizen of the world, Edgar Bronfman has given life to